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many savage tribes, and was observed in the classic world. The only difference between the Roman Feralia and Lemuralia and the Christian All-souls-day is the date. In Normandy it is the custom to kill a cock, and sprinkle some drops of its blood on the sill of a new house before inhabiting it. This is a survival of the custom of immuring a victim in the foundation of a building (*see* Tylor's "Primitive Culture," vol. i., p. 94, etc.).

A curious department is that of *formulettes*, or formulas, used in games, etc. One of the most common objects is that of elimination, or, as the children say, to show who shall be "it."

Games, proverbs, spells, etc., are not wanting. Among the miscellaneous articles, the most valuable is a dictionary of names given to the inhabitants of different localities in France. It has been compiled by Lucien Merlet, and runs through many numbers.

It is greatly to be regretted that the *Mélusine* was not able to continue its career as a periodical, but it will always be a valuable mine for the student of folk-lore.

5.—*The Troubadours: a History of Provençal Life and Literature in the Middle Ages.* By FRANCIS HUEFFER. London: Chatto & Windus. 1878. 8vo, pp. xviii.-367.

WHILE the interest in Provençal literature has been steadily increasing among scholars during the last ten years, very little has been done to bring it to the notice of the general reader. Although the subject is especially adapted to close scientific study, it still has a popular attractive side, and only needs to be presented in the right way to find a host of appreciative readers. The period during which the troubadours flourished is one of the most brilliant in modern history, and is full of romantic episodes. Provençal literature was not restricted to the south of France, but the troubadour was welcomed from the court of Aragon to the court of Frederick II., at Palermo. Nor was the period of its splendor a restricted one; it flourished three centuries, and then fell with the liberty of the country that had given it birth.

Until recently the general reader has had at his disposal only Sismondi's meagre account of Provençal literature, who, like most later writers, drew heavily on Millot's imperfect "*Histoire des Troubadours.*" The only other general histories are those of Fauriel ("*Histoire de la Poésie Provençale,*" 3 vols., Paris, 1847) and Diez ("*Poesie der Troubadours*" and "*Leben und Werke der Troubadours,*" Zwickau, 1826, 1829). The former is largely occupied with

the now exploded theory of an extensive Provençal epical poetry, while the latter are more works of reference than readable histories. In English there are before Hueffer's work only two books on the subject : Rutherford's "The Troubadours," London, 1873 ; and Miss Preston's "Troubadours and Trouvères," Boston, 1876.* The former is an utterly unreliable production, revealing on every page the gross ignorance and coarseness of the writer ; the latter is much better, but is too limited in its plan, and the author is not thoroughly at home in her subject.

It will be seen, from this brief review, that there was room for a good popular history of Provençal literature, and, although Dr. Hueffer's work is far from perfect, it is immeasurably superior to the works last mentioned.

Dr. Hueffer's object, as stated in the preface, is "rather to attract learners than to teach more or less proficient students. In plain language I wished, in the first instance, to write a readable book, and according to general prejudice such an achievement is impossible on the scientific principle." In pursuance of this object, the author divides his work into three parts : In the first, "General," he gives a rather meagre sketch of the language, and then examines more or less thoroughly the various forms of Provençal poetry and prose. The second part, "Biographical," contains sketches of some of the most interesting troubadours, although we miss such famous poets as Bernard de Ventadour, Marcabrun, etc. The third part, "Technical," added, as the author states, "for scholarly purposes," consists of chapters on rhyme, rhythm, the stanza, and some interlinear versions, "addressed to those easy-going amateur philologists who believe themselves able to master a language by simply plunging into its literature, without any previous study of grammar or dictionary."

While the author has succeeded, we think, in producing a readable work, his book shows unmistakable signs of haste and lack of study of the sources. The first is shown in the unmethodical arrangement of the matter, and the frequent violation of chronological order ; the latter is curiously shown on page 138, where the author cites a French version of a German translation of a Provençal poem, instead of giving an English version direct from the Provençal. In spite of these blemishes, which we trust will be corrected in another edition, Dr. Hueffer has produced an interesting and valuable book that will attract readers whom a more learned and methodical work would have repelled.

* See NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, March, 1877.